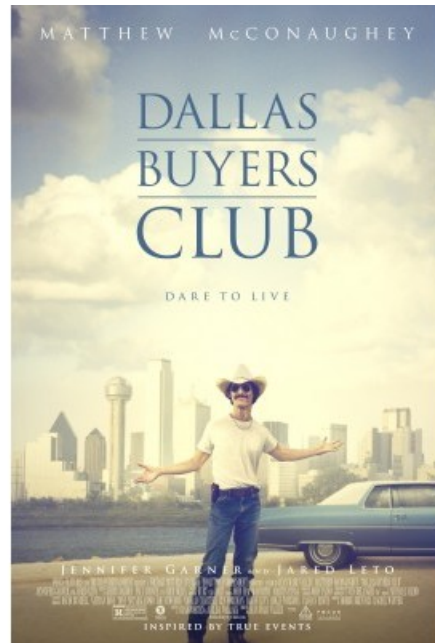


DALLAS BUYERS CLUB
By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



Dallas Buyers Club is a true story based on the life of Ron Woodroof, a heterosexual man who contracted HIV in 1986 through unprotected sex. Matthew McConaughey is unrecognizable as an emaciated, yet powerful and charismatic, hell-raiser who pays a high price for his reckless ways. Busting bulls and balls, Woodroof desperately tries to get help for his condition from the traditional medical system, only to be turned away. Seeing not only a need, but an opportunity to help himself and others, Woodroof decides to take control of his destiny and finds in the illegal underground the answers to his prayers.

Dallas Buyers Club was his way of circumventing the red tape and bureaucratic trappings of the FDA and the pharmaceutical companies' greed by getting innovative but untested treatments from south of the border and overseas. When a person knows his life is on the line, he will do anything to get what he needs or die trying. In this case, Ron doesn't die and were it not for him, the progress made in HIV and AIDS research may not be as advanced as it is today. One man can make a big difference. Contracting the fatal virus though made an even bigger change in his life and his way of relating to those with whom he would have had no association, except that the gay community accepted him as he learned to accept and even befriend them.

Transformation is the central element here. *Dallas Buyers Club* is about loss of health, denial, anger and, finally, not resignation or acceptance, but commitment to fight bravely and without apology. Through the story of one man, we see the fight of many whose lifestyle, ignorance or misfortune left them outcasts and rejected by society. Without the pioneers who lived and died in the Castro and those who tested new treatments in other countries where desperation is the mother of invention, where would we be today?

Many of us today do not consider HIV to be a death sentence. Those who have lived for 20 years or longer know the sacrifices that were made. *Dallas Buyers Club* reminds us of just how valuable each life is and reminds us that we do not need to resign ourselves to anything when we have the will to beat the odds, and, in that wager, give even greater meaning and purpose to our lives.

I give *Dallas Buyers Club* five prescriptions.

